



# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

June 9, 2011

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name and title.

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

## **SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AWARDS LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOMELESS PROGRAM "BENEFITS ENTITLEMENT SERVICES TEAM" WITH A REGIONAL CITATION**

This is to notify your Board that the Social Security Administration (SSA) awarded Los Angeles County with a Regional Commissioner's Citation for the Benefits Entitlement Services Team (BEST). This program, funded by your Board's Homeless Prevention Initiative, increases access to social security benefits for street-based and shelter-based homeless. The Department of Health Services (DHS) prepared a competitive solicitation which resulted in JWCH Institute, Inc. (JWCH) being awarded a contract to provide the services. BEST is a partnership between DHS, who manage the contract and oversees the administration of the program, our office, the federal SSA, and the State of California's Disability Determination Services. BEST is the first partnership of its kind and is focused on ensuring that people experiencing homelessness are served holistically with federal benefits such as cash assistance, medical and social services, and housing.

BEST began enrolling clients in December 2009. As of March 31, 2011, there have been 503 applications submitted, with 393 that have been decided upon (110 are still in review). Of the 393, there have been 334 approvals and 59 denials. This equates to an 85 percent approval rate. In addition, the average length of time for a decision to be made is approximately 50 days.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"*

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Each Supervisor  
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This honor was reported in the most recent United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, a copy of which is attached. In the article, Peter Spencer, the Regional SSA Commissioner stated that "The homeless community directly benefits from this partnership. Social Security looks forward to continuing this partnership and setting up similar programs across the State. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has a vision that others should emulate. I commend them for setting the bar high."

Congratulations to your Board for its continued leadership, and congratulations to DHS and JWCH for implementing an award winning program.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Kathy House at (213) 974-4530 or via e-mail at [khouse@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:khouse@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:KH  
EB:ljp

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
Health Services  
JWCH

BEST Award Update\_Board Memo\_June 2011



**News Article for U. S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Newsletter**  
**Submitted by: Leslie S. Walker, Regional Communications Director, Social Security Administration**

### **L.A. Homeless Services Receive Social Security Award**



On April 26, 2011 Peter D. Spencer, Regional Commissioner, Social Security Administration, Region IX, awarded a Regional Commissioner's Citation to the Benefits Entitlement Service Team (BEST). This is the highest award granted by the Social Security Administration in the San Francisco Region.

The award was granted to the:

- 1) Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors;
- 2) Los Angeles County Department of Health Services; and
- 3) John Wesley Community Health Institute and its satellite clinics.

The BEST team is a partnership among the federal Social Security Administration, the State of California's Disability Determination Services (DDS), Los Angeles County Department of Health Services and John Wesley Community Health Institute (JWCH). The purpose is to stabilize the homeless population of Los Angeles County by transitioning eligible individuals to a federal funding stream and medical care.

This partnership, the first of its kind in the nation, began in December 2009. Since then, over 350 homeless individuals have been awarded and stabilized with cash benefits, medical and social services, and housing. The allowance rate for the cases adjudicated by BEST, Social Security and the State Disability Determination Services has been over 70%. The processing time for these cases is under 60 days, which represents half the processing time of disability cases processed throughout the State of California.



A Project Manager oversees claims intake. SSA trained the Eligibility workers. The State DDS trained the medical staff at the clinics. DHS conducts administrative oversight of the program. The JWCH CEO oversees the day-to-day operations at the clinics. Contact liaisons have been established at the four Social Security field offices parallel to the four intake sites and the DDS.

The homeless community has been the direct benefactor of this partnership. It is an honor to present this award in recognition of this partnership. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' vision has become a reality. SSA looks forward to continuing this partnership and emulating it throughout the State.

April 27, 2011